

Borough of Rocky Hill
Planning Board
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
June 14th, 2011

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Board was called to order by Chairman Mark Blasch at 7:39 pm.

NOTICE OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Chairman Blasch read the following statement into the record: This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. This meeting was included in a list of meetings transmitted to the Courier News and Somerset Spectator on January 23rd, 2011. Notice remains continuously posted as required under the Statute. A copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

Present: Robert Ayrey, Cathy Cann, Tim Corlis, Martin Englebrecht, Michael Goldman, Julia Hassler, George White, Ed Zimmerman, Mark Blasch

Absent: Linda Goldman, Connie Hallman, Raymond Whitlock

Also Present: Planning Board Attorney Valerie Kimson, Planning Board Planner Tamara Lee

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- Regular Meeting Minutes 5/10/11

Motion was made by Corlis to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Cann. Motion carried on roll call vote all ayes.

For: Ayrey, Cann, Corlis, Goldman, White, Zimmerman, Blasch
Against: None
Abstain: Englebrecht

APPLICATIONS

Preservation Application: Deck, 1 Montgomery Avenue- Karen Hinkson, property owner was sworn in by attorney Kimson. Ms. Hinkson explained to the board her desire to add a deck onto her home. Ms. Hinkson reviewed the plans that were submitted to the board. Board Secretary Newman stated that Zoning Officer Whitlock reviewed the plans and they conformed to all zoning requirements, however, since it is viewable from Green Acres property the plan needed to be reviewed by the board.

PUBLIC COMMENT- The floor was opened to the public.

Susan Fisher- Ms. Fisher inquired as to whether the deck would be viewable from the front. Ms. Hinkson replied no, the deck was on the rear of the home.

Hearing no further questions the floor was closed.

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Motion was made by Cann to approve the application as presented. Motion was seconded by Zimmerman. Motion carried on roll call vote- all ayes.

For: Ayrey, Cann, Corlis, Englebrecht, Goldman, Hasser, White, Zimmerman, Blasch
Against: None
Abstain: None

-Informal Concept Review: 5 Montgomery Avenue -

* Attorney Kimson recused due to a firm conflict specific to Trinity Church, the current owner Mr. Plotnick, applicant, thanked the board for their comments from the last meeting. Mr. Plotnick stated he and his architect listened to the concerns and they have redesigned the home for the lot. Mr. Plotnick introduced architect, Steven DeRochi. Mr. DeRochi stated they have changed direction with the design and have created a new home, based on the concerns heard, that would be similar to an out building or a barn. Mr. DeRochi stated the home is positioned in the same way it was before, it is a compact shape that has been scaled back, it will have a metal roof and the color options have been left open for the board to opine on. Mr. DeRochi stated the home sits well within necessary setbacks and it was placed with the desire to not inhibit the neighbor's view of the open space. Mr. Plotnick distributed pictures of the lot to show that the home will be almost invisible from adjacent properties. Board Member White asked how tall the structure would be. Mr. DeRochi indicated it would be roughly 30' tall. Board Member Ayrey asked if there was a noise issue at all with a metal roof. Mr. DeRochi stated there was not a noise issue for any of the neighboring properties. Board Chairman Blasch commented on the complete new direction of the design, which he felt was very appropriate.

PUBLIC COMMENT- The floor was opened to the public.

Susan Bristol- 104 Washington Street- Ms. Bristol commended the Board on their guidance for the applicant and commented on the attention to detail that has been paid to this application.

Mr. Obey- Mr. Obey stated he was happy with the new direction, which it works with the landscaping, and it is not as obtrusive as the original design. Mr. Obey stated he still had a concern with the size.

Doris Hartman- 7 Toth Lane- Ms. Hartman stated this was a great plan and that metal roofs are very quiet.

Bob Uhrick- Mr. Uhrick commented on the design. Mr. Uhrick felt there was significant attention paid to detail and that there would be a nice view from the road.

Paul Renasta- Trinity Church- Mr. Renasta stated that the former owner, Julia Ball, would be pleased with what was being proposed.

Susan Fisher, 9 Montgomery- Ms. Fisher commented that the new concept looked great and there was a vast improvement over the last plan.

Hearing no further questions/comments the floor was closed.

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Use Variance Application: Block 11 Lot 2 & 3

*Board Members Hasser and Zimmerman recused themselves

Eric Goldberg, an attorney with Stark and Stark, introduced himself to present the application. Attorney Kimson swore in Mr. Goldberg, Milt Charbenot and Peter Morgan and also swore in Tamara Lee, PP the Boards Planner.

Mr. Goldberg stated they would like to modify the existing conditions that are on the property. Mr. Goldberg recapped the history of the building and stated the current owner has done extensive high-end renovations reviving how the building looked in the 1920's. Mr. Goldberg stated there are 14 parking spaces currently. Mr. Goldberg stated the purchaser operates an investment firm; therefore the current use variance is not applicable to his needs. Mr. Goldberg stated there is also concern for future purchases as the current uses are very prohibitive.

Milt Charbenot, 309 River Road, Belle Mead, introduced himself as a commercial/industrial real estate broker. Mr. Charbenot stated he was hired by the current owners to market the property and has received a lot of offers, however, the current uses are limiting the potential purchases. Mr. Charbenot stated that the property was marketed clearly advising potential purchasers that the property façade cannot be altered at all.

Bill Martin, 301 Springhill Road, Skillman, introduced himself as an entrepreneur that currently has a contract to purchase the property. Mr. Martin stated he operates a software company and an investment firm in Princeton with 30 employees. Mr. Martin stated that they have outgrown their current space and is looking to relocate the investment portion of his company to Rocky Hill, which would consist of 5-6 people. Mr. Martin stated he still plans to rent the apartment on the property. Mr. Martin stated he does not plan to alter the building at all with the exception of the name on the sign. Mr. Martin stated he appreciated all of the effort that had gone into the meticulous renovations and that he would make sure he maintained its current condition. Mr. Martin also stated that he lived locally so he would be someone that would be respectful of the community. Mr. Martin stated the current parking would be adequate, he could see an expansion of 1-3 employees in the future. He also stated they do not have clients coming and going on a regular basis.

Tamara Lee, Tamara Lee Consulting, summarized her report for the board. Ms. Lee stated that the nature of the application would determine whether an amendment of the original use variance would be necessary or a totally new use variance would need to be granted all together, the board would need to make this determination. Ms. Lee stated the applicant needs to specify its desired uses, at which point the board can make that determination. A discussion ensued regarding the potential uses that could be utilized if all restrictions were lifted. Board Member M. Goldman stated he would like to see a list of desired uses for the Board to approve as speculating would be too vague. Goldman felt it would be too difficult to cover all businesses, and to ensure none were missed in the process. Board Vice Chair Cann feels Rocky Hill is a very walk-able community that could be impacted depending on the type of business that utilized that space. Upon conclusion of the discussion the applicant was asked to provide a list of desired uses for the building. The application was carried until the July meeting.

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PUBLIC COMMENT- Mayor Zimmerman stated that he was concerned with the application and its broadness. Mayor Zimmerman also stated that there are resolutions and ordinance in place to protect the Borough. Mayor Zimmerman stated he supported businesses in town; however lifting all restrictions so the property owner can make money is a concern. Mayor Zimmerman stated the Board is very willing to work with them; however, the application needs to be defined better.

*Attorney Kimson stated the application was carried on record until the July 12th meeting therefore there was no need to re-notice.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was opened to the public.

Susan Bristol, 104 Washington Street, Ms. Bristol informed the Board of the Historic District Celebration that will be taking place the weekend of October 9th. Ms. Bristol invited the Board since they were instrumental in designating the district. Ms. Bristol also stated that there would be oral histories of many residents and she asked that the Board email any thoughts or items that may be of interest to be included in the newsletter.

Hearing no further questions or comments the floor was closed.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Blasch stated he had no comments for the board.

OTHER BUSINESS

Resolution 2011- Approval of Preservation Application: Shed - 37 Crescent Avenue- Keller
Motion was made by Hasser to approve the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded by White.
Motion carried on roll call vote – all ayes.

For: Ayrey, Cann, Corlis, Hasser, White, Blasch

Against: None

Abstain: Englebrecht, M. Goldman, Zimmerman

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made at 9:04 PM by Cann to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Hasser. All voted in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully Submitted:

Rebecca Newman
Planning Board Secretary